

Betty, destined to become the second super typhoon of the season, was first detected by satellite on 7 August north of the eastern Carolines. After reaching tropical storm intensity 200 nm southeast of Guam, Betty passed 50 nm north of Saipan. Westerly winds of 30 kt with gusts to 50 kt and some local flooding were experienced there during the afternoon and evening of the 10th.

Betty attained typhoon strength after passing through the Marianas, and shifted to a more westerly course as the subtropical ridge began to build northeast of Iwo Jima. The central sea level pressure dropped steadily during her five-day journey toward the southern Ryukyu's. A minimum pressure of 910 mb and maximum sustained winds of 135 kt were observed by reconnaissance aircraft on the 15th (Figure 4-17).

At that time, gale-force winds reached 450 nm from the center in the eastern semicircle, and 300 nm elsewhere. The extent of typhoon-force winds was also exceptional: A Japanese ship, TAKAMATSU MARU, reported 65-kt winds 200 nm southeast of the eye (16/0600 GMT).

Betty's track during 15-16 August appeared to be influenced by a col over the northern East China Sea. This weakness in the ridge to the north resulted in a more northerly track. The center thus passed through the southern Ryukyu's during

the morning and afternoon of the 16th. The eye crossed the northern tip of Ishigaki Shima (16/0612 GMT) when the barograph recorded 942.5 mb. Maximum sustained winds on Miyako Shima, 60 nm from the center, were 61 kt from the south-southeast (16/1555 GMT). A maximum gust of 96 kt was recorded at Kume Jima, located 165 nm northeast of the center.

During her advance toward the southern Ryukyu's, Betty's circulation intensified the southwest monsoonal flow over Luzon bringing torrential rains. The resulting floods caused seven deaths in the northern province of Ilocos Sur. A light aircraft with four persons aboard was also reported missing.

Betty passed 40 nm north of Taiwan during 16-17 August. A minimum sea level pressure of 940.9 mb was registered at Pengchia Hsu Island (16/1745 GMT) as the eye passed overhead. Maximum sustained winds of 101 kt (16/2045 GMT) and a gust of 108 kt (16/2010 GMT) were also reported at that station.

Heavy rains (32.42 in.) were recorded at Alishan, resulting in considerable flooding in Taiwan. An estimated 300,000 people were stranded by floodwaters in Sanchung City (Figure 4-18) and the two adjacent townships of Luichow and Wuku, west of Taipei. Many highways were made impassable and rail service was interrupted by landslides in northern and central Taiwan. Eighteen storm-related deaths were reported in Taiwan while over 220 homes were totally destroyed and over 130 badly damaged.

Betty made landfall the evening of the 17th on the China coast near 27°N and lost strength rapidly as she moved inland.

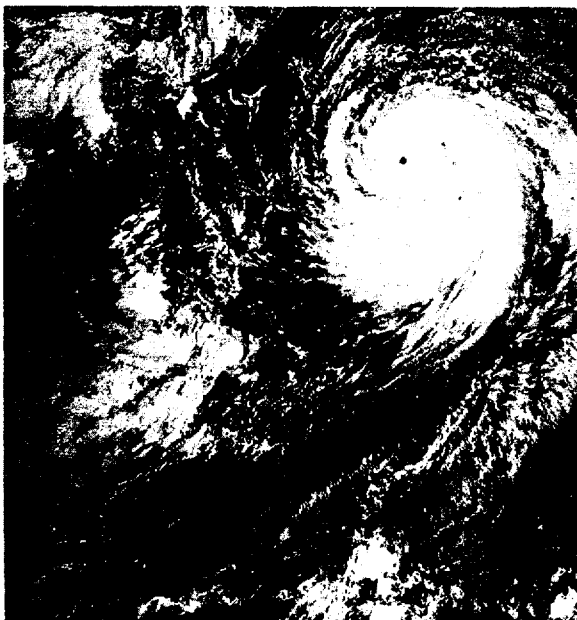


FIGURE 4-17. Super Typhoon Betty 420 nm east-southeast of Taipei, Taiwan, 14 August 1972, 2347 GMT. (DAPP data)



FIGURE 4-18. The flooded Sanchung district of Taipei, Taiwan, due to torrential rains brought by Typhoon Betty.--Courtesy of China Post